



SENATOR RUNNER'S WEEK IN REVIEW

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Innovative Solutions to Relieve Truck Traffic on Our Freeways

By State Senator George Runner

The Port of Los Angeles serves as the nation's busiest port with the Port of Long Beach a close second – combined ranking third worldwide. Because Southern California is the gateway for an estimated 40 percent of all the containers of imported goods, we share the roads with these valuable goods as trucks leave the ports to transport them throughout the nation.

The good news is that Southern California has developed an industry out of assembling, warehousing and distributing these products all over the United States that produces a significant economic effect upon our local communities that should not be underestimated. However, despite the clear economic benefits that the ports and transport industry provide, there are other problems associated with this industry which are hard to ignore. There is increasing pressure on our freeways, as well as serious environmental impacts, including air quality problems affecting the Los Angeles Basin.

Four of our major highway arterial routes that are on the way in or out of our ports are in the top seven in the country in terms of truck volumes projected for 2020. In fact, according to the Reason Foundation, trucks through these corridors often take up 25 to 30 percent of the space. This valuable freeway space is also used by commuters trying to get to work on time or get home to see their families, creating the traffic congestion that has become an all too familiar part of our daily lives in this region. Furthermore, the trucks carrying high-value shipments of goods also get caught in commuter traffic jams causing them costly delays, and significantly reducing the efficiency of our goods transportation movement.

Fortunately, California ingenuity is forging ahead with innovative solutions intended to mitigate traffic congestion on our busy freeway system, the diesel emissions of idling trucks and the other associated environmental negatives of this industry.

I am very supportive of the potential economic benefits that one particular project can deliver to our region. The Southern California Logistics Airport (SCLA) is located off Interstate 15 in the City of Victorville. SCLA is equipped with a multi-modal facility served by rail lines, ground and air transportation, which offers to be an optimal solution for the good movements crisis in our area. SCLA can serve as a major distribution center for the cargo that comes in from the Port of Los Angeles and the Port of Long Beach by taking much of the goods transportation off of the freeways. The creative concept is the cargo could be loaded directly from the incoming cargo ships right to the existing rail line. Then the cargo can be transported straight to SCLA where the goods can be properly sorted to the various trucks in order that the cargo can be sent to its intended destination.

SCLA is strategically located to serve the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, as well as San Diego and

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Port Hueneme, and has convenient access to major freeways and highways, two intercontinental airport runways capable of air transport directly to Europe and Asia, and a secured onsite US Customs Office to oversee international trade clearance. The facility is located on the former George Air Force Base, within a 60,000 acre redevelopment district that gives the airport the freedom to optimize freight handling operations that the LA and Long Beach ports can only dream about.

With clear logistical and growing environmental hurdles facing our region, SCLA has the potential to mitigate these problems by serving as an alternative site for freight handling that is outside the Los Angeles basin but close enough to our seaports, rail yards, and airports so that it can complement their operations. Currently, 60 percent of the total goods that are transported outside of California move along the 15 corridor. So this proposal would not create additional truck traffic on I-15. By drawing truck traffic outside the basin, this project can significantly reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. This is a solution that addresses current problems without destroying our region's economy.

There is also another innovative proposal with the potential to address our problems in a responsible manner. This proposes to use rail to ship 200 containers a day through the Alameda Corridor to the Antelope Valley Freight Transfer Center (AVFTC) located in the City of Lancaster. The concept is estimated to eliminate 200 diesel trucks a day from the freeways around the ports. The trucks would then pick up their cargo away from the port and have it distributed from the AVFTC, similar to SCLA. The Clean Air Partners Transportation System (CAPTS) will use four LNG dual-fuel powered locomotives to carry the freight. Each one of these locomotives would displace approximately 225,000 gallons of diesel per year. The LNG powered locomotive operations will reduce 68.7 tons of NOx emissions while also removing 200 trucks a day from the congested freeways. Funding for the first of these locomotives has been approved by the Board of Directors of the South Coast Air Quality Management District under the Carl Moyer Memorial Air Quality Attainment Program.

These proposals are common sense. The infrastructure is in place and the communities are willing to participate. It's important to find solutions that make sense and it is possible to diminish congestion, shorten commutes and clean the air.

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